



CONVENTION NEWS

Monday • October 24 • 2011

Welcome to the 46th Convention of the Nova Scotia Federation of Labour! Over the next few days we will hear from union leaders and activists as well as from many of you. Last evening we listened to inspiring words from CLC President Ken Georgetti, and heard about the coming challenges in health care from Mike McBane, National Coordinator of the Canadian Health Coalition.

We hope you will take part in the valuable debate on resolutions — there are a number of microphones placed in the hall for this purpose. Please identify yourself before speaking.

Don't forget to drop by the many display booths set up outside the hall. These friendly folks would love to tell you why they're here, and you might learn some information that is surprising and very useful.

Keep your eyes and ears open and have a great convention!

Welcome Ken Georgetti



Canadian Labour Congress President Ken Georgetti brought greetings from the 3.2 million members of the CLC. He commended Nova Scotia for securing the federal shipbuilding contracts, which will mean good union jobs for many years to come. But he urged us to pressure the NDP government for first contract legislation for these jobs, to allow workers to unionize without intimidation.

He stated that the single most important public policy issue was wage inequity, saying he welcomes

what the young people occupying Wall Street and other city spaces across North America are doing:

"It's time to get the greed out of the system," he told delegates. "Corporate greed has caused the fifth

economic meltdown in 25 years."

He pointed out that the wage gap between union and non-union workers is six dollars an hour. To put that in context, he explained that a unionized job at the shipyard would bring in \$600,000 more in a lifetime than a non-union job.

"Union jobs built this country," he said. "They built communities that could thrive and flourish." He encouraged delegates to go out and talk about the union advantage.

cont. on back...

No Scents

Please refrain from using perfume or scented body care products during convention — some of these products can cause severe allergic reactions in those among us who are environmentally sensitive.

Free Parking

Free parking is available on the main entrance side of the hotel or in back on the harbour side.

Songs of Protest

Join us this evening at Celtic Corner, 69 Alderney Drive in downtown Dartmouth, as we raise our steins to the Cape Breton Labour Protest Song Project. Talented musicians will take to the stage at 8 pm to celebrate the launch of this unique CD project.

Ken Georgetti

... cont.

"If we want the middle class to grow, help us unionize Canada."

Georgetti also encouraged labour activists to get on board with the tools of technology: "We can't play 8-tracks and expect to organize people listening to their iPods," he said. "We have to change. We have to be more relevant to our members, because we have a compelling story to tell."

Breakfast for Sisters...

All women delegates are invited to join the NSFL Women's Committee tomorrow morning (Tuesday) at the Harbourside Terrace outside the Lake City Ballroom at 7:30 am for breakfast. The hotel offers a full buffet breakfast... and it's provided free courtesy of the Women's Committee! What a way to start your day!

Canadian Health Coalition urges labour to stand on guard for health care

Mike McBane, National Co-ordinator of the Canadian Health Coalition, warned delegates about the coming end of the 10-year accord in health care, saying that we will be negotiating with a federal government in 2014 that is "not known for its commitment to shared programs." He said that with \$40 billion a year in federal transfer payments, there is a lot at stake.

He told delegates to be wary of the giant, for-profit corporations that view health care as a commodity to be bought and sold. "They are saying government has no business looking after seniors — leave that to private market."

He said we need to return to the vision rooted in our nation's history, that health care is a public good.



He talked about the conflict of values between the Canada Health Act and the market traders.

"Private health care offers more for less, and for the rest of us, less for more," he said.

He said it was shocking how much the federal government has stepped back from its responsibility for health care, and reminded delegates that it is our job to protect the federal role in health care.

He said the most important piece to be dropped off the table since the 2004 health accord was the national pharmaceutical strategy. He said one of the consequences is that the inappropriate use of pharmaceuticals continues to be the leading cause of death in this country.

He expressed horror at the targeting of 2-year-olds by drug companies. "The drug-

ging of our children and our seniors is insane," he said, "just because we don't want to pay people to look after them."

McBane said it was urgent that we begin to counteract the misinformation that health care is not sustainable, and referred delegates to the health coalition website (healthcoalition.ca) for materials to help organize around that.

He encouraged activists to set up meetings with federal MPs in their own ridings. "If the federal government doesn't see the light, make sure they feel the heat."

On Display...

We are pleased to host displays this year from the following organizations... drop by and see what they have to say:

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| Atlantic Canada Health Care Coalition Society | Growthworks AWARE | Public Service Alliance of Canada |
| NS Federation of Union Retirees | Office of Worker Counsellor/NSFL Workplace Education | NDP |
| Cavan Advertising | Bob Keayes of Higgins Insurance | NSFL Anti-Racism/ Human Rights Committee/CLC |
| Prostate Cancer Canada Awareness | | |